

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
2nd Session

Vote No. 197

July 17, 1996, 6:29 pm
Page S-7992 Temp. Record

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS/6 FA-18C/D Fighters Only

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1997 . . . S. 1894. Bumpers amendment No. 4891.

ACTION: AMENDMENT REJECTED, 44-56

SYNOPSIS: As reported, S. 1894, the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1997, will appropriate \$244.74 billion for the military functions of the Department of Defense for fiscal year (FY) 1997, which is \$10.2 billion more than requested and \$1.33 billion more than the FY 1996 funding level.

The Bumpers amendment would reduce the \$489 million appropriation in the bill to purchase 12 F-18C/D fighters to a \$255 million appropriation to purchase 6 F-18C/D fighters.

Those favoring the amendment contended:

The Bumpers amendment is simple. It would cut the number of F/A-18C/D fighters that this bill will appropriate in half. Instead of buying 12 of these planes, the United States would buy 6, which is the amount that the Senate authorized to be bought just a few days ago in the defense authorization bill. Even purchasing 6 planes is a generous proposal, because the Pentagon does not want any of them. All it wants are F/A18-E/Fs. According to the General Accounting Office (GAO), E/Fs cost twice as much as C/Ds and are only marginally better. The GAO has issued a devastating report that proves that the Navy's plan to purchase 640E/Fs at a cost of \$53 million each is a colossal waste of money. If the Navy were instead to buy C/D models, it would save \$17 billion, and would lose almost nothing in effectiveness. Virtually every plane in the United States' 3,800 fighter plane inventory is a modern, so-called fourth generation fighter. All of the United States' potential allies have just 104 modern fighters among them. Given these facts, clearly the better option is just to cancel E/F production entirely, and we indeed support that option, but the reality is that we do not have much chance of getting Senators to agree to such a sensible proposal. However, we do think we have a chance of getting Senators to agree to the Bumpers amendment. Though we know we cannot convince Senators not to buy the E/F fighters, we are

(See other side)

YEAS (44)			NAYS (56)			NOT VOTING (0)	
Republicans (6 or 11%)	Democrats (38 or 81%)		Republicans (47 or 89%)	Democrats (9 or 19%)		Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Brown	Akaka	Kennedy	Abraham	Helms	Boxer		
Grassley	Baucus	Kerrey	Ashcroft	Hutchison	Breaux		
Hatfield	Biden	Kohl	Bennett	Inhofe	Feinstein		
Jeffords	Bingaman	Lautenberg	Bond	Kempthorne	Ford		
Kassebaum	Bradley	Leahy	Burns	Kyl	Heflin		
Snowe	Bryan	Levin	Campbell	Lott	Inouye		
	Bumpers	Lieberman	Chafee	Lugar	Kerry		
	Byrd	Moseley-Braun	Coats	Mack	Mikulski		
	Conrad	Moynihan	Cochran	McCain	Sarbanes		
	Daschle	Murray	Cohen	McConnell			
	Dodd	Nunn	Coverdell	Murkowski			
	Dorgan	Pell	Craig	Nickles			
	Exon	Pryor	D'Amato	Pressler			
	Feingold	Reid	DeWine	Roth			
	Glenn	Robb	Domenici	Santorum			
	Graham	Rockefeller	Faircloth	Shelby			
	Harkin	Simon	Frahm	Simpson			
	Hollings	Wellstone	Frist	Smith			
	Johnston	Wyden	Gorton	Specter			
			Gramm	Stevens			
			Grams	Thomas			
			Gregg	Thompson			
			Hatch	Thurmond			
				Warner			

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

hopeful that we will be able to convince them that we cannot afford to buy both the C/Ds and the E/Fs. The United States cannot afford to be so extravagant. It should put all of its money into buying one plane, thereby achieving at least some economies of scale. The bottom line is that the Bumpers amendment would stop the United States from spending \$234 million on a plane that it cannot afford and that the Navy does not want. We urge our colleagues to pass this amendment.

Those opposing the amendment contended:

This bill will provide funds for six more F/A-18C/D aircraft because those additional planes are required to meet our defense needs until we can produce significant numbers of F/A-18E/Fs. Significant numbers of the E/Fs will not be produced until 2009. According to the Director of Air Warfare for the Navy, a minimum of 436 F/A-18C/D aircraft are required to fill the 10 active carrier airwings. The Navy expects that without continued procurement, it will be 30 aircraft short. If the normal attrition factor of eight aircraft per year is factored in, then the gap grows even wider. In recent years, the Navy has suffered many aviation setbacks in its acquisition programs. The A-6F was canceled by Congress; the Department of Defense canceled the A-12; and the Navy itself canceled the ATF and F-14D. The Navy is basically left with the F/A-18C/D and F/A-18E/F fighters. Some Senators have said that we should not buy these aircraft because the Defense Department did not officially request them. They and we know that the Defense Department officially asks for what the Administration tells it to ask for, and they and we know that the purchase of these aircraft is a very high priority for the Navy. These planes will be used to replace aging F18As that are being kept in the active inventory because we have not purchased enough C/Ds. The C/Ds have better radar, carry more sophisticated weapons, and can fly at night and in adverse weather. We support the building of the F/A18E/Fs, but we cannot yet produce enough of them to meet our carrier task force needs. To cover the shortfall, we should purchase more F/A18C/Ds. The Bumpers amendment would block the purchase of these additional fighters, thereby creating a gap in our defense capabilities. Clearly this amendment should be rejected.